

HALAL TOURISM: AN ANALYSIS OF TOURISM POTENTIAL IN TORAJA

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the potential development of halal tourism or Muslim-friendly in Toraja. The development of halal tourism in Indonesia has shown significant progress, aligned with the increasing number of global Muslim travelers. Indonesia's recognition as a Top Muslim-Friendly Destination in the Global Muslim Travel Index reflects the country's commitment to providing tourism services that are friendly to Muslim travelers. The research methodology employed a desk research approach integrating data collection through analysis of scholarly articles, digital media including news and social media, and literature review to gather data for analysis.

The research findings indicate that Toraja as a tourist destination has great potential to be developed as a halal or Muslim-friendly destination. Muslim travelers show high interest in this destination, especially if facilities such as halal food, places of worship, and accommodations compliant with Islamic principles are available. Toraja, with its unique cultural heritage and natural beauty, attracts Muslim travelers, yet the infrastructure supporting halal tourism needs improvement. Collaboration between the government, tourism industry stakeholders, and local communities is crucial to realizing this development. With appropriate strategies, the development of halal tourism in Toraja will not only increase the number of Muslim tourist visits but also promote local economic growth and preserve local culture.

Keywords: Potential, Halal Tourism, Muslim-Friendly, Toraja

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia successfully achieved the title of Top Muslim Friendly Destination of The Year 2023 in the Mastercard Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2023 in Singapore (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif/Badan Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif, 2023). This achievement is a recognition of Indonesia's efforts in developing Muslim-friendly tourist destinations by providing various facilities and services that cater to the needs of Muslim travelers. Indonesia has consistently improved halal infrastructure, such as certified halal restaurants, easily accessible places of worship, and accommodations offering Muslim-friendly services. Additionally, the Indonesian government actively promotes halal tourism through various initiatives and policies, including training for tourism industry stakeholders to enhance their understanding of Muslim traveler needs. This accomplishment not only proves Indonesia as a welcoming destination for Muslim travelers but is also expected to accelerate job creation in the tourism sector. This achievement supports targets to attract 8.5 million tourists and create 4.4 million new jobs by 2024. Job creation in the tourism sector is seen as more effective in empowering communities compared to other sectors (Voi.id, 2023).

Halal tourism or Muslim-friendly has become a global trend alongside the increasing number of Muslim travelers. Muslim tourists are now seeking destinations that not only offer natural beauty and cultural experiences but also cater to their spiritual and religious needs (Permadi et al., 2019). The data shows significant growth in the halal tourism industry. According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) report, the number of Muslim travelers is projected to reach 230 million by 2026 (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf RI, 2021). This trend reflects the significant potential that can be tapped by tourist destinations, including Toraja. Muslim travelers tend to seek destinations that provide

halal facilities, such as halal food, places of worship, and environments conducive to their religious practices or worship. Understanding these needs is crucial for developing Muslim-friendly tourism. Toraja, located in South Sulawesi, is renowned for its unique culture, including traditional funeral ceremonies and traditional houses called tongkonan. Its rich natural beauty and cultural heritage make Toraja one of Indonesia's premier tourist destinations. Despite its unique culture, Toraja's potential as a halal tourism destination remains largely unexplored. This research aims to analyze this potential, focusing on the needs and preferences of Muslim travelers.

Analysis of tourism infrastructure, such as accommodations, restaurants, and transportation, is crucial to understand Toraja's readiness to welcome Muslim tourists. Halal facilities are one of the main aspects that will be evaluated in this research. Toraja's strong local culture can be a unique attraction for tourists. However, it is important to assess how this culture can be integrated with the concept of halal tourism without compromising its authenticity and traditional values. The development of halal tourism in Toraja faces various challenges, including limited local understanding of Muslim tourist needs, inadequate halal infrastructure, and the need for training among tourism industry stakeholders.

The role of local government and supportive policies in promoting halal tourism development is crucial. Proactive policies and government support can expedite the development and promotion of halal tourism in Toraja. Active participation from the local community is essential for the success of halal tourism. Education and training on the importance of halal tourism can help the local community understand and support these initiatives.

Developing halal tourism in Toraja requires in-depth analysis of infrastructure readiness, local community understanding, and support from government and private sectors. This study aims to evaluate Toraja's potential as a halal tourism destination, considering these various factors. By exploring and understanding the needs and preferences of Muslim travelers, Toraja is expected to optimize its tourism potential while enriching the travel experience for Muslim visitors.

Halal and Muslim-friendly tourism in Toraja have some key differences, although both focus on providing services that cater to the needs of Muslim travelers. Halal tourism refers to a concept that fully complies with Islamic Shariah principles. This includes providing certified halal food, easily accessible places of worship, and an environment that ensures tourism activities are in accordance with Islamic rules. In the context of Toraja, halal tourism means having restaurants that exclusively serve halal food, hotels that provide facilities such as qibla direction in each room, and ease of access for daily religious practices.

Meanwhile, Muslim-friendly tourism is more inclusive and flexible, emphasizing comfort and convenience for Muslim travelers. This concept includes providing various facilities and services that support basic needs of Muslim travelers, such as information about nearby places of worship, multiple halal food options, and staff who understand Muslim culture and needs. In Toraja, Muslim-friendly tourism might mean having several restaurants offering halal menus, hotels providing information about nearby places of worship, and tourist destinations that respect prayer times and needs.

The main difference between the two concepts lies in the level of adherence to Islamic principles, where halal tourism offers an environment that fully complies with Islamic norms, while Muslim-friendly tourism provides basic comfort for Muslim travelers without emphasizing full compliance with Shariah.

Research on halal tourism or Muslim-friendly in Toraja is crucial as it helps identify and develop tourism potential that is welcoming to Muslim travelers, a growing global market segment. By understanding the needs and preferences of Muslim travelers, Toraja can

enhance its attractiveness as a tourist destination, expand its tourist base, and stimulate local economic growth through increased tourist visits. Furthermore, this research contributes to understanding how the integration of local culture and halal facilities can be harmoniously achieved, providing an authentic and satisfying travel experience for Muslim visitors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, halal and Muslim-friendly tourism has emerged as one of the most important segments in the global tourism industry. This growth is driven by an increasing number of Muslim travelers seeking destinations that cater to their religious needs. Existing literature shows that the concepts of halal and Muslim-friendly tourism not only involve providing halal food but also encompass broader services such as accommodations, places of worship, and activities that adhere to Islamic principles.

The concepts of Halal tourism and Muslim-friendly

According to Battour and Ismail, halal tourism is a type of tourism that encompasses all aspects of life that comply with Islamic Shariah law, including food, accommodation, and tourism activities. They emphasize the importance of cleanliness, purity, and adherence to Islamic law in all aspects of tourism services (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Henderson expands this definition by introducing the concept of Muslim-friendly, which is more inclusive and flexible. This concept includes providing several services that facilitate Muslim travelers, such as information about places of worship and multiple halal food options, without necessarily fully adhering to Shariah law (Henderson, 2010).

The growth of the Halal tourism market

The Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) reports that halal tourism continues to grow, with projections indicating the number of Muslim travelers reaching 230 million by 2026. This study shows that destinations capable of providing halal facilities and services can attract more Muslim tourists and enhance tourism revenue (Fathoni, 2020). Han asserts that the development of halal tourism can make a significant contribution to the local economy through increased tourist visits and revenue (Han et al., 2019).

Best Practices in Halal Tourism

Malaysia is often cited as a prime example in the development of halal tourism. Razzaq explains how Malaysia has integrated the concept of halal tourism into their national tourism policy, providing various halal facilities, and effectively promoting their destinations to Muslim travelers. This experience demonstrates that collaboration between the government, private sector, and local community is crucial in creating a Muslim-friendly environment (Razzaq et al., 2016).

The Potential and Challenges of Tourism in Toraja

The potential of halal tourism in Indonesia indicates that despite awareness of its importance, many destinations still lack adequate infrastructure and facilities. Toraja, with its unique cultural heritage and strong traditions, has significant potential to be developed as a halal tourism destination (Putra, 2021). However, challenges such as limited halal facilities, lack of understanding among the local community, and the need for training for tourism industry stakeholders need to be addressed to realize this potential.

The Role of Government and Policies

El-Gohary emphasizes that government policy support is key to the development of halal tourism. Governments can play a crucial role in providing necessary infrastructure, setting halal standards, and promoting halal destinations (El-Gohary, 2016). In the context of Toraja, support from the local government in the form of supportive policies and infrastructure investment will be crucial. The development of halal and Muslim-friendly tourism offers significant opportunities for tourist destinations like Toraja. By understanding the needs of Muslim travelers and learning from best practices in other destinations, Toraja can develop tourism that is more inclusive and Muslim-friendly.

Challenges such as infrastructure limitations and lack of community awareness can be overcome through effective collaboration between government, private sector, and local communities. This research will provide a solid foundation for sustainable and inclusive development strategies, ensuring that Toraja can excel as a premier halal tourism destination.

METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative method by conducting a literature review (Yusanto, 2020). The approach employed is descriptive analysis (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022) in exploring the tourism potential in Toraja, researchers rely on various data sources such as scholarly articles, news, social media, and other written materials to gather relevant information (Firmansyah & Dede, 2022). After collecting data from various sources, then we compile it into conclusions and develop findings in this research. They also analyze the tourism potential from the perspectives of halal and Muslim-friendly tourism. A literature review is a process that involves identifying, selecting, reviewing, and synthesizing relevant sources of information related to specific research topics or issues (Sugiyono, 2020). The purpose of a literature review is to gain an understanding of the latest developments in research, identify existing knowledge gaps, and establish a theoretical foundation that serves as the basis for the ongoing research (Moleong, 2018). This method employs a desk research approach by integrating data collection through the analysis of digital media, including online news, social media, and literature reviews. Desk research, also known as literature review or secondary research, is a research approach that focuses on gathering and analyzing existing data without conducting new surveys or experiments. This method relies on literature, print and online sources, databases, reports, and other available information. The analysis process is systematically conducted through a literature review focusing on the themes of halal and Muslim-friendly tourism potential.

RESULTS

The Potential of Halal tourism or Muslim-friendly in Toraja

Toraja, located in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and unique traditions. One of its main attractions is the traditional funeral ceremony known as Rambu Solo. This ceremony is one of the most complex and expensive funeral rituals in the world, often spanning several days and involving various customary processes, including buffalo slaughtering. The Tongkonan traditional houses, characterized by boat-shaped architecture, also attract tourists eager to delve deeper into Toraja's cultural heritage.

The natural beauty of Toraja is equally captivating, surrounded by stunning mountains and terraced rice fields that offer spectacular views for visitors. Popular natural destinations in Toraja include Londa, a cave used as a burial site with hanging coffins on its walls, and Kete Kesu, a preserved traditional village recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage cultural site. This combination of natural beauty and rich culture makes Toraja a unique and appealing tourist destination.

To enhance tourist visits, Toraja is also developing the concept of halal tourism or Muslim-friendly. This involves providing facilities such as halal-certified restaurants, easily accessible places of worship, and accommodations that adhere to Islamic principles. By integrating these elements, Toraja aims to attract more Muslim travelers who wish to experience the beauty and cultural uniqueness of Toraja without compromising their beliefs. Support from the government, private sector, and local community is crucial in realizing this development and making Toraja a more inclusive tourist destination.

The potential of halal tourism or Muslim-friendly shows significant differences in their approaches to tourism service development. Halal tourism focuses more on compliance

with Islamic Sharia principles, such as halal food, ease of access for prayers, and an environment supportive of religious values. This includes providing certified halal food, adequate prayer facilities, and awareness of cultural and religious sensitivities in organizing tourism activities. On the other hand, the concept of Muslim-friendly tourism is broader and more inclusive. In addition to providing services that meet the basic needs of Muslim travelers, such as halal food and prayer facilities, Muslim-friendly tourism also considers aspects such as willingness to adapt to the habits and preferences of various Muslim groups from different countries and cultures.

Another difference lies in their emphasis on cultural and social aspects. Halal tourism tends to focus more on preserving the integrity of religious values, while Muslim-friendly tourism emphasizes inclusivity and openness to cultural diversity within the global Muslim community. This may include respect for local customs, efforts to promote interfaith tolerance, and increasing understanding of cultural differences among Muslims. Overall, both halal and Muslim-friendly tourism provide solutions to meet the needs and preferences of Muslim travelers, with varying focuses on Sharia, cultural, and social aspects. Both play significant roles in developing inclusive and sustainable tourism for Muslims worldwide.

The potential of halal tourism or Muslim-friendly is a growing segment within the global tourism industry (Satriana & Faridah, 2018). This concept not only includes the availability of halal food but also considers other aspects such as accommodation, activities, and environments that align with the values and needs of Muslim travelers. This growth is largely driven by an increasing number of Muslim travelers seeking holiday experiences that are not only physically enjoyable but also spiritually and culturally fulfilling according to their religious principles.

Destinations that adopt the concept of halal tourism offer a variety of facilities and services that cater to these needs, ranging from hotels providing prayer facilities and halal food to tours and activities that respect Islamic customs and beliefs. This appeals not only to individual travelers but also to families and large groups seeking an inclusive and accommodating environment for their needs (Syah Putra & Tucunan, 2021).

The government and tourism industry players in many countries are increasingly recognizing the economic potential of this segment and are starting to develop products and infrastructure that support halal tourism. For example, developing tourism areas that offer specific services for Muslim travelers, such as prayer time arrangements, halal food provision, and accessibility to important information like the qibla direction.

However, challenges remain in fully developing this tourism segment. One of them is ensuring that halal standards are well maintained, including the authenticity of halal labels and the satisfaction of Muslim travelers with the services they receive. By addressing all these aspects, the potential of halal tourism can become a significant source of growth for the global tourism industry in the future.

The potential for halal tourism or Muslim-friendly in Toraja, South Sulawesi, promises the development of a destination that respects the religious and cultural values of Muslim travelers. Known for its rich cultural heritage and unique traditions, Toraja can offer a tourism experience that includes accommodation sensitive to worship needs, authentic halal food, and a deep understanding of local culture, enhancing its appeal to Muslim travelers seeking spiritually and culturally enriching experiences (Satriana & Faridah, 2018).

The difference between halal tourism and Muslim-friendly tourism in Toraja lies in their approach to the tourism experience for Muslim travelers. Halal tourism in Toraja will emphasize compliance with Islamic Sharia principles, such as the availability of certified halal food and adequate prayer facilities. Meanwhile, Muslim-friendly tourism tends to be more inclusive by adapting to the needs and preferences of various Muslim groups,

while also respecting local traditions in a way that is sensitive to the religious and cultural values of the community.

As for the potential of halal tourism or Muslim-friendly in Toraja, they include: (1) Unique Culture and Nature of Toraja: Toraja is known for its unique funeral ceremonies, traditional Tongkonan houses, and beautiful natural landscapes such as mountains and terraced rice fields. These unique features make it an attractive destination for Muslim tourists seeking rich and different cultural experiences. Additionally, the potential development of halal tourism in this region can attract more Muslim tourists who want to enjoy the beauty and uniqueness of Toraja without compromising their religious beliefs. (2) Availability of Halal Food: One key factor in developing halal tourism is the availability of halal food. In Toraja, efforts to provide certified halal restaurants and eateries would greatly enhance its appeal to Muslim tourists. Providing clear information about halal dining options and ensuring a food supply chain that adheres to halal standards are crucial steps to attract Muslim tourists. (3) Demand in the Halal Tourism Market: The global halal tourism market is rapidly growing. Muslim travelers seek destinations that not only offer beauty and tourism experiences but also meet their spiritual needs such as halal food, prayer facilities, and an environment that respects Islamic values. By developing infrastructure that meets these needs, Toraja can attract this large and expanding market segment. (4) Prayer Facilities: Adequate prayer facilities like mosques or prayer rooms are crucial for Muslim travelers. In Toraja, constructing or renovating comfortable and easily accessible prayer facilities will enhance the attractiveness of this destination. Moreover, information about the locations of these prayer facilities should be easily accessible to tourists. (5) Muslim-Friendly Accommodations: Hotels and accommodations that provide Muslim-friendly facilities such as qibla direction, prayer mats, and announced prayer times will attract more Muslim tourists. Training hotel staff on the specific needs of Muslim travelers is also important to ensure adequate and friendly service. (6) Promotion and Marketing: Effective promotion and marketing of Toraja as a halal tourism destination are crucial to attract Muslim tourists. Marketing campaigns should highlight Toraja's cultural uniqueness and how the destination meets the needs of Muslim travelers. Collaboration with platforms and travel agencies focusing on halal tourism can help expand the reach of these promotions. (7) Education and Training for the Local Community: Education and training for the local community and tourism industry stakeholders on the concept of halal tourism are essential. Understanding the needs and preferences of Muslim travelers will help provide appropriate and friendly services. Training programs can cover aspects such as providing halal food, offering Muslim-friendly services in hotels, and respecting Islamic values in daily interactions. (8) Collaboration with Government and Private Sector: Collaboration between the government, private sector, and local community is crucial for developing halal tourism in Toraja. The government can play a key role in providing regulations and incentives for businesses willing to participate in the halal tourism industry. Meanwhile, the private sector can invest in the necessary infrastructure and services. (9) Development of Educational and Cultural Tourism: Toraja can also develop educational and cultural tourism focusing on Islamic teachings and local history that are Muslim-friendly. Educational programs that teach about Toraja's culture within the context of Islamic values can attract Muslim travelers interested in educational and inspirational experiences. (10) Enhancing Tourist Experience: The development of halal tourism in Toraja should focus on enhancing the tourist experience. By providing facilities and services that meet their spiritual needs, Muslim tourists can enjoy the beauty and uniqueness of Toraja without compromising their beliefs. These steps will not only increase Muslim tourist visits but also promote local economic growth and preserve local culture. (11) Supporting Infrastructure and Government Policies: Indonesia has shown commitment to supporting the development of halal tourism through supportive policies and regulations. This support includes providing adequate infrastructure, international promotion, and incentives for tourism industry players investing in this sector. With strong support, Toraja can become a leading destination for Muslim travelers, thereby increasing tourist visits and supporting local economic growth.

The potential for halal tourism or Muslim-friendly in Toraja promises the development of a destination that integrates religious and cultural values with authentic and profound tourism experiences. By offering services such as certified halal food, adequate prayer facilities, and sensitive appreciation of local traditions, Toraja can attract more Muslim tourists seeking spiritual and culturally rich experiences. Leveraging its cultural richness and natural beauty, Toraja has great potential to become a top destination for Muslim travelers looking for a welcoming destination that aligns with their religious values.

Challenges in Developing Halal Tourism Destination in Toraja

Developing a halal tourism destination in Toraja presents a complex challenge, yet holds significant potential to enhance inclusive and sustainable tourism. One of the main challenges is the local community's rejection of the halal tourism concept, stemming from inadequate efforts to educate them. This lack of education leads to misunderstandings regarding halal tourism policies (Putra et al., 2021). Additionally, there is a challenge regarding the availability of authentic halal food that is guaranteed in its authenticity. Toraja is renowned for its unique traditional culinary richness, which often does not meet international halal standards. This necessitates significant efforts in food certification and education for the local community and tourism industry stakeholders to ensure Muslim visitors feel comfortable with the food they consume (Nur, 2022).

Furthermore, the provision of adequate prayer facilities is another significant challenge. Despite the enchanting cultural and natural characteristics of most tourist spots in Toraja, the lack of adequate prayer facilities can often hinder Muslim tourists who wish to perform their worship comfortably. Thoughtful planning is required in the placement and construction of public facilities that are friendly to Muslims, including information about the qibla direction and clean prayer spaces.

Effective promotion and better understanding of the needs of Muslim tourists are also crucial (Dwi Wulandari & Indahsari, 2021). Many Muslim tourists' full potential is not yet fully recognized by industry players and local communities. Education about the preferences and habits of Muslim tourists, such as arranging prayer times and sensitivity to dietary needs, needs to be enhanced to improve their tourism experience in Toraja.

Integrating local cultural values with the needs and expectations of Muslim tourists is also a significant challenge. Toraja boasts a rich cultural heritage, closely guarded by the local community. Balancing tourism experiences that preserve the integrity of local culture while accommodating the needs of Muslim tourists in aspects such as attire, behavior, and social interactions requires a careful and collaborative approach among government, communities, and industry stakeholders.

Additionally, developing supportive infrastructure for Muslim tourists is also an integral part of this challenge (Hasan, 2022). This includes good transportation accessibility, family-friendly accommodations for Muslims, and easily accessible information about available facilities and services. By improving and developing this infrastructure, Toraja can enhance its appeal as an attractive halal tourism destination.

Another challenge is ensuring strong cooperation between local governments, communities, and the private sector to create a welcoming environment for Muslim tourists (Saleh et al., 2022). This includes forming policies that support the development of halal tourism, sustainable destination management, and training to raise awareness about the needs and expectations of Muslim tourists among the local workforce.

Furthermore, creating comprehensive and satisfying tourism experiences for Muslim travelers requires a better understanding of market preferences and global halal tourism trends. This involves adjusting tourism promotions with cultural and religious sensitivity and providing tour packages that align with religious values and practical needs of Muslim tourists. Managing risks and security is also crucial in developing halal tourism

destinations in Toraja. Ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for Muslim visitors, including food safety and healthcare facilities, is an important responsibility that local authorities and tourism operators must proactively address.

Challenges in developing halal tourism destinations in Toraja include: (1) Limited Halal Infrastructure: Toraja faces limitations in providing authentic halal food and adequate prayer facilities. Infrastructure such as restaurants offering halal food needs improvement with clear certification to meet recognized international standards. (2) Lack of Local Community Awareness: The importance of halal tourism is not fully understood by the local community. Education and socialization about the needs and preferences of Muslim tourists need to be enhanced to make them more open and better prepared to accommodate visitors from outside. (3) Collaboration Between Government, Private Sector, and Local Communities: Solid collaboration between local government, the private sector, and local communities is key to developing effective and sustainable strategies. This includes developing policies that support halal tourism, sustainable destination management, and training to increase awareness and skills in serving Muslim tourists. (4) Utilization of Technology: Technology can be a valuable tool in overcoming infrastructure and communication challenges. Using digital platforms to promote halal services and facilities, as well as providing accurate and easily accessible information to Muslim tourists, can enhance Toraja's appeal as a halal tourism destination. (4) Development of Halal Tourism for Economic and Social Benefits: Developing Toraja as a halal or Muslim-friendly destination not only provides economic benefits but also extensive social benefits. This includes creating new jobs, increasing income for local communities through the tourism sector, and promoting cultural diversity and tolerance among local communities and visitors.

By addressing these challenges in an integrated and sustainable manner, Toraja has significant potential to become an attractive halal tourism destination that respects and promotes its rich local cultural heritage while providing a satisfying experience for Muslim travelers from around the world.

CONCLUSION

The development of halal tourism or Muslim-friendly in Toraja holds significant potential to enhance the destination's attractiveness in the global tourism market. With a deep understanding of Muslim tourists' needs such as halal food, prayer facilities, and services that respect Islamic values, Toraja can position itself as a more inclusive and appealing destination. The potential of the halal tourism market continues to grow, offering substantial economic opportunities for regions that cater to Muslim travelers' needs. Moreover, integrating Toraja's rich and unique local culture with the concept of halal tourism can create authentic and satisfying travel experiences. Toraja as a destination needs to address several challenges, such as limited halal infrastructure and the local community's lack of awareness about the importance of halal tourism. Collaboration between government, the private sector, and local communities is crucial to developing effective and sustainable strategies. This requires appropriate policies and support from various stakeholders, leveraging technology, and developing halal tourism to provide broad economic and social benefits. Developing Toraja as a halal tourism or Muslim-friendly destination that respects and promotes its local cultural uniqueness while meeting the needs of Muslim travelers represents a potent economic opportunity for the local economy.

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